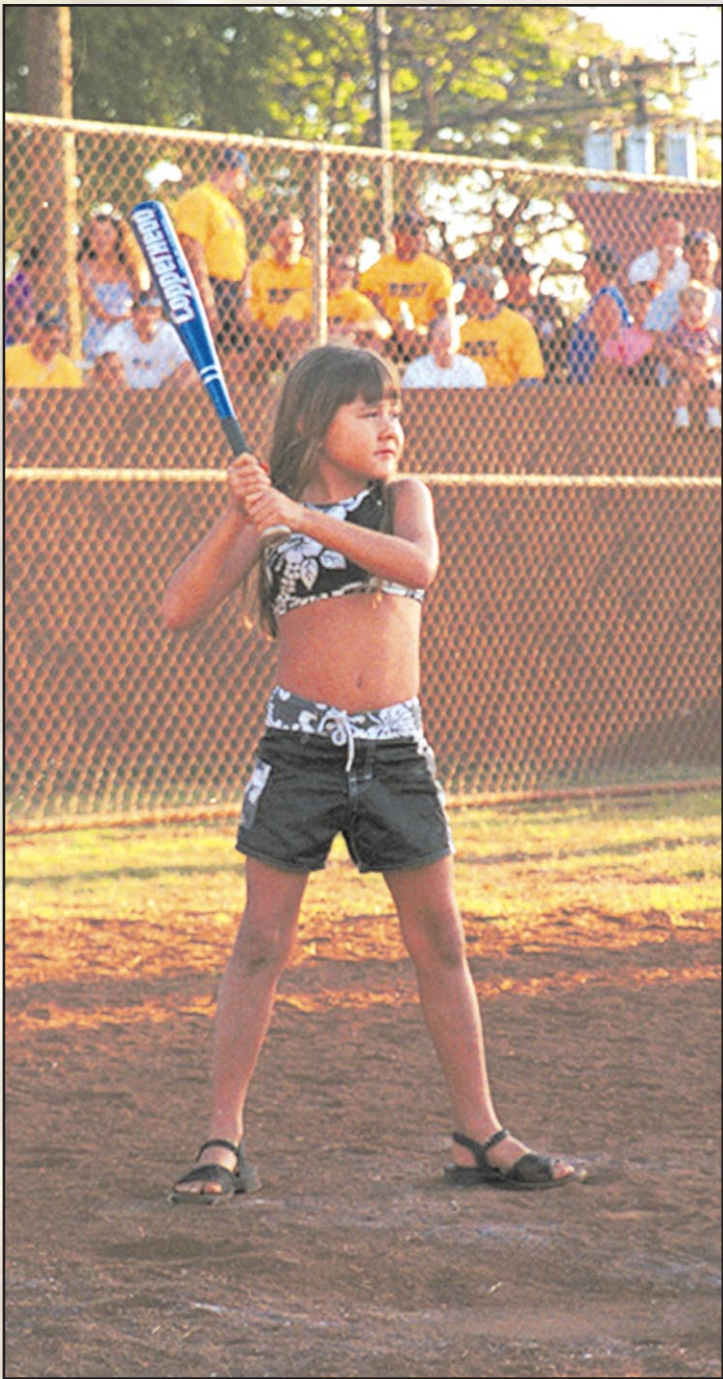


Liberty Call



Ghost Players and kids from the youth baseball clinic got together for a group photo after a hard day of training on the field.

PLAYING WITH GHOSTS



Seven-year-old Victoria See stepped up to bat in the ghost players "Greatest Show On Dirt" comedy performance.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, a team of "ghosts" from baseball past appeared from behind the corn stalks of Ward Field on Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

Sixteen men from Dyersville, Iowa brought the magic and power of their home diamond, the "Field Of Dreams," to Hawaii. To make the ghosts feel more at home in Hawaii, Ward Field was set up with corn stalks in the outfield to simulate the visiting team's actual Field Of Dreams.

"We travel all over the world and we meet so many wonderful people, it is hard to explain what it feels like" said Keith Rahe the general manager for the Ghosts.

The Ghosts have played all over the U.S. and on American military bases around the world such as Japan, Cuba, England, Spain, Italy, Greece, Crete, Turkey and Germany.

On May 6, the ghost team put on a two-hour youth baseball clinic then moved on to its hour-long "Greatest Show On Dirt" comedy performance. The players then took on a hand-selected team of military and civilian players from Pearl Harbor in a game of "serious" baseball.

"I was amazed that they were here," said Becky Cully, a civilian visiting Pearl Harbor on business. "I saw them once before when I was in Iowa on a trip and fortunately I got to bring my 6-year-old, Jacob on this trip [to Hawaii] and he just loved it"

Kids who attended the youth clinic got hands-on experience and practice from players and most of them left with a little more confidence than they came with.

"The clinic was great and the ghost players took every kid under their wing and treated them like they were their own," said Chris Knaggs, commanding officer of the Fleet Industrial Supply Center. "My son Patrick was batting better than before he got here just from having the guys help him."

Ghost players coached children from all ages on everything from pitching to base running, and a few of those kids walked away gloating with pride from playing ball against the professional players.

"It was fun to play against the big boys," said seven-year-old Megan Ferrell. Megan was sure to get autographs later when she found out that five of the Ghosts were actual players from the 1988

Field Of Dreams movie starring Kevin Costner.

Day turned into night as the Ghosts took on team Pearl Harbor in some "all in good fun" baseball, as described by Ghost player and retired Navy Chief Petty Officer Anthony Nicometo.

The Pearl Harbor players jumped right into the game, many agreeing that the experience was a good challenge.

"I thought that this was great. I am naturally competitive and we get used to playing guys from around the Island, so when we get the chance to play some college guys we tend to get up a little more for that," said AG2(AW) Richard Rainer.

In the second to last inning of the game the Navy came back and won the game 10 to 7. No frowns came across the Ghost players' faces; they were in good spirits and full of compliments about Pearl Harbor.

"We have played ball around the world and you

Ghost Information

For specific information on the Field Of Dreams Ghost Players

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or e-mail them at dreams@mwci.net.

could not ask for a better setting than this, with the battleships in the background of the field it was really nice" said ghost player John Rotz one of the team's top entertainers.

Leaving people with smiles on their faces and dreams in their hearts the ghost players left most people understanding just why they are called the "Harlem Globetrotters of baseball".

After their visit to the Hawaiian isles, the players continued their tour of the Pacific in Johnston Atoll, Micronesia, then to Guam, Japan and South Korea and back home. The tour will have been there longest ever.

At the end of a memorable day, the remaining spectators watched as the Field Of Dreams was transformed back into Ward Field as the corn stalks disappeared into a loading van.

"It's almost sad to see the players go and the corn taken away because it just brought so much magic," said David O' Ryan, a civilian contractor who watched the game. "In a way I think that people who were here today will think about that as they pass by the field from now on."



"Field Of Dreams" ghost players pose for a picture outside of building 150 just before their show Sunday May 6.

Story and photos by JO3 Sunday Sawyer